

**Written Testimony of Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30)**  
**Make It in America: What's Next?**  
**PANEL 3: American Innovation**

I'd like to thank Mr. Hoyer for inviting me to testify today and for his leadership in efforts to revitalize American manufacturing.

I strongly believe that if the United States is to remain competitive over the long term, we need to ensure that American companies maintain the capacity to manufacture new and innovative products here at home. The key to maintaining this capacity is through strategic investments in advanced manufacturing research, development, and education.

I'm proud that several programs have been enacted that contribute to the goals of Make It in America. These include the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation, which improves the competitiveness of U.S. manufacturing and increases domestic production; stimulates U.S. leadership in advanced manufacturing research, innovation, and technology; and accelerates the development of an advanced manufacturing workforce. Another example, the Regional Innovation Program provides support to innovative initiatives that accelerate technology commercialization, job creation, and economic growth in the United States.

Regional innovation efforts connect economic development stakeholders across a region. Limited investments of public funds are leveraged to raise often significant additional funding from the private sector to further strengthen the regional economy. Finally, there is the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program, a national network of 400 Centers and Field Offices that advise small- and medium-sized U.S. manufacturing firms on ways to enhance productivity, technological performance, and strengthen their global competitiveness.

I recently hosted a business roundtable with small business owners in my district and the U.S. Department of Commerce's Assistant Secretary for Global Markets, Arun Kumar. My goal in organizing the Roundtable was to offer entrepreneurs, investors and small business owners in my District who are creating jobs and accelerating the economy, the opportunity to speak directly to senior Administration officials.

Texas is the nation's largest goods exporter, and small businesses made up more than 90-percent of companies that exported from Texas in 2013. More than \$27 billion of goods were exported from the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Washington needs to do a better job listening to the issues that are important to small businesses, and we need to better prepare our nation's small businesses for joining the global economy.

In 2007, Congress passed bipartisan, landmark legislation that originated in the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology based on recommendations from the 2005 National Academies' path breaking report *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*. The report found that the scientific and technological building blocks critical to our economic leadership was eroding at a time when many other nations were gaining strength in these areas. The *America Competes Reauthorization Act of 2010* continued the Committee's and Congress's commitment to strengthen American competitiveness through sustained investments in science, innovation, and education. The *America Competes Act of 2015* that I introduced along with my Democratic Committee colleagues would renew our commitment to maintaining our scientific and technological leadership now and long into the future by supporting research, fostering innovation, supporting manufacturers and industry, and ensuring we have a prepared workforce. The bill also strengthens regional economies through an innovation voucher pilot program. In addition, it includes authorization of the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, Energy Frontier

Research Centers, and Energy Innovation Hubs to help advance the U.S.'s transition to a clean energy economy and to support the growth of new sectors of the economy – and the jobs that come with them.

Unfortunately, the Republican Competes legislation that passed the House this year does nothing to further our nation's scientific and innovation enterprise. The bill fails to garner the bipartisan support or embody any of the collaborative characteristics of the two previous comprehensive authorizations. I am concerned that if we are not willing to make these investments as a nation - or worse, if we roll back our level of investments - then we will lose a generation of STEM talent to other pursuits. Our capacity for science and innovation and our global economic competitiveness may never recover from such a loss.

Another piece of legislation that will help us innovate is H.R. 591, the *Engineering Biology Research and Development Act of 2015*, which I introduced with Congressman Sensenbrenner. This bill would establish a federal engineering biology research program, coordinating Federal R&D in engineering biology, expanding public-private partnerships, and educating and training the next generation of engineering biology researchers. Engineering biology research has the potential to address some of the most serious societal challenges like improving human health, providing food for a growing population, reducing our dependency on fossil fuels, and protecting our environment. Other countries are making significant progress in engineering biology research. It is time for the United States to recognize the significance of this emerging research area and its potential to lead to increased economic growth and job creation.

The legislation and initiatives I have discussed and the rest of the "Make it in America" agenda will ensure that the U.S. is positioned to meet the challenges ahead. Investments in our science, innovation, and education enterprise are essential for our long-term economic growth and prosperity. This should not be a partisan issue. I hope that we'll be able to work with our colleagues across the aisle to move some of these bills in the coming months.

Thank you again for your time.